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Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Items of interest to women, from U.S. Department of Agriculture. (Story of Washerman's Club from Prairie Farmer, Chicago, Illinois.)

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Today, homemakers, prepare to be entertained as well as instructed. Instead of reporting what's been happening in Washington, our correspondent has sent us a story from Illinois. The heroes are six hundred men of that grand old State. Alone and unaided, they did the family washing on a certain day in February, a day so cold their fingers froze to the clothes lines. The heroines are six hundred wives, who sat back and said nothing -- or practically nothing -- while their husbands toiled over the washtubs.

But, as our Washington correspondent suggests, we'll let the women tell the story. First, we'll hear from Mrs. Leslie Branch, of Piatt County, Illinois. Her husband had a peck of trouble. He had to mop up the kitchen before he could even start washing, because one of the children dumped over a pail of wash water he'd set on the floor. Then the clothes wringer wouldn't work. Mr. Branch didn't straighten out the clothes, and of course they clogged the wringer. The hardest job of all was hanging out the clothes -- Mr. Branch hung the pillow cases lengthwise, and he hung two of his wife's dresses lengthwise, and pretty soon he had more clothes than clothesline, and his wife had to come to the rescue. "He disappeared," she says, "and didn't show up till dinner time, and not one word was said about the washing."

Now, come over into Iroquois County, and meet Mrs. Jay Carter. Says Mrs. Carter: "Some tubfuls were washed 20 to 25 minutes, while others came out with a bounce in three or four, depending on my husband's interest in the story he was reading. . . At last it was all done. He even wiped up the floor. After lunch I went in to tell him how proud of him I really was, and there he sat -- sound asleep. His face betrayed the weariness within that 'six feet of the best brawn and muscle in the county' -- which he had boasted of in the morning."

Next county heard from is Stark -- and Mrs. Otto F. Burwell, whose husband could not understand why he couldn't put more clothes in the machine at a time, regardless of color, or how dirty they were. After letting the clothes stick go through the wringer several times, he got on to the way of using it, reports his wife.

Mrs. J. A. Hammond of Will County says her husband set a wonderful example for her in the cheerful way he went about his wash-day duties. Aside from doing his work cheerfully, he did it quite satisfactorily -- except that he starched the underwear!

Mrs. Steve Bolatto of Grundy County says it was really so much fun to watch someone else struggle with the hardest job of the week that she thought it was Sunday, and went calling in the afternoon. Her husband's hardest job was to rub the collars and cuffs clean. He thought something was wrong with the machine, or it could clean the clothes. "I believe," says Mrs. Bolatto, "that from now on he will change his shirts more often, and be more careful. Just when he had the clothes on the line, it began to snow and he had to bring them in. It was rather trying on his disposition, but he didn't give up till all the clothes were clean."

Mrs. Fulks of Schuyler County says that speed was everything with her husband. Whiteness and cleanness were of secondary importance -- five minutes for each machineful was enough, in his estimation. She protested against his wearing his hat in the house, but he explained he couldn't waste time hanging it up. He couldn't be bothered taking off his overshoes either. His only regret over the whole affair is that his neighbor was first to get his clothes on the line, "which," explains Mrs. Fulks, "explains all the speed."

Mrs. Leland S. Brasel of Marion County says her husband had difficulty getting in the right position over the washboard. He'd rub with one hand, and hold on to the side of the tub with the other, as if he were afraid he'd fall in head first. Mrs. Brasel says her husband's experience over the washboard had the desired effect -- he decided to install a modern washing outfit.

And now, homemakers, let's hear from a few of the gallent men who fought the good fight with washboard and wringer. You see the object of this Modern Washerwoman's Club is to help make washing easier. Here are some suggestions from the men:

"Send it to the laundry," says one. "Join a nudist colony," says another. "Sing such songs as 'Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie,' or 'Barbara Allen,'" suggests another. "Such songs lighten the work considerably and also have a tendency to keep the wife out of the wash house." From still another: "Move to the South Sea Islands so when your clothes get dirty all you have to do is to go out and cut some fresh grass."

But seriously -- and after all, this wash-day project had a serious side -- the men made many good resolutions. They resolved to have clothes lines at the correct height, to put clothes baskets on wheels, to get large dippers for transferring water from tub to tub, to see that there is plenty of fuel handy on wash day, to stop wiping greasy hands on overalls.

One man suggested a community laundry, electrically equipped for both washing and ironing -- and a dry cleaning plant along with it. Another discovered that the first necessity, on a cold wash day like February 25, is a good wash house with a good floor and drain, and a water supply in the house.

Some of the material results of the wash-day of February 25 are modern water systems, power washing machines, and rolling tubs that are self-draining.

In the end, all the washermen agreed with Arthur Blessman, who said: "If they would quit manufacturing washboards, a lot of women would be better off."

And now, to go back to our Washington correspondent, who sent us the report.

"I was interested in it," she says, "because for many a year, off and on, I have been sending out reports on 'Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering,' basing my talks on scientific research done by the Bureau of Home Economics. Many's the time," she says, "I have told women how to equip laundries -- the type of tubs to buy, the kind of wringers and clothes boilers and laundry stove, washing machines and drying equipment. Some women profited by my words, and sent for the laundry bulletin published by the Bureau of Home Economics.

"But I am disconsolate," says our Washington friend, "when I think how much simpler would have been my task of improving the great American wash day if I had only suggested to the women that they let the men do the family washing -- just for once, on a good cold winter day. My hat's off," she says, "to the editors of the Prairie Farmer, who thought of the Modern Washerwoman's Club."

And that's the end of our Washington letter. . . Homemakers, I really think we ought to do something for our correspondent, to show her she's appreciated. If you have home laundry problems, I suggest that you send for the bulletin, "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering." You can get it from the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The bulletin is free.

I'll be with you again on Monday.

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